

[Rowdy Buell]

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[Life history??]

[Phipps?], [Woody?]

[Rangelore?]

[Tarrant?], Co., [Dist.?] 7 [?]

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[FC?]

[Rowdy?] [Buell?], 78, was born on his dad's stock farm near Bedford, Ind. [An?] old circuit riding physician gave him a horse at the age of six, and he was taught to ride at an early age. His interest in horses and his knack of handling cattle and horses enabled him to receive employment on several Idaho Ranches. He was employed as a stage coach driver in two states, then migrated to the Texas range and was employed on several Texas ranches. He quit the range to become a land speculator, age forced him to retire in 1931. He now resides in Katy, Texas. His story:

"I was born on my dad's stock farm near Bedford, Indiana, on March, the 30th, 1859. I've been asked many times about how many critters he had but to save my life, I can't say because I can't [recollect?]. I don't guess he had over a 100 though, because me and my bud handled them all after I was around 10 years old.

"Up 'til I was about six years old, I didn't do anybody any good but keep bread and butter from spoiling. I don't know what would have become of me if an old circuit riding doctor, who went from place to place as regular as mail, hadn't of given me an old broke down

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hoss. He'd bought himself a new one, and sort of took a shine to me so he just up and gave me the hoss. [About?] all I recall of him now is, that he was a baldface and bony as the very dickens.

My bud use to hold me on the hoss, and ride along on his hoss while I was getting my bearings. One real good thing about the hoss being so old was that he never bucked at any time. He was just too tired and too old, I guess. [Anyway?], I learned to ride on him, and helped my bud tend to the critters an the place for two years. After that, dad bought me a new pony, and a brand new saddle. Did I strut my stuff then!! I thought I was a regulation cow poke and 2 mentioned to my dad about paying bud and me. [To?] everybody's surprise, he did. [He?] paid us [\$10.00?] a month, and promised us that [he'd?] give us a 2.00 raise every year. The catch to it was that we were to give our mother 5.00 a month for board, and take the other 5.00 to buy our clothes. [I?] thought that was a little hard at first, and the whole family raised a row but now, when I look back and review it all, I [see?] that dad gave us the very best training possible in making us accept responsibility early. That made us men before the ordinary kid can realize what responsibility is. That early training caused me to acquire a certain shrewdness in money matters, and both of us boys [made?] a lot of money in business after we got away from the range.

"Since our place was a stock farm, it neccessarily had to be fenced, and that made herding easier. Dad also grew a lot of feed, and wintered critters for several outfits. [?] had to handle them without extra pay, but we liked it, The more critters, the better the cow poke. (so we figured) Nearly every year, dad would buy up some steers and hogs to winter. [?] didn't mind the steers but the hogs were a sore spot to us. [?] didn't figure a cow poke ought to herd hogs but dad figured different so what could we do? We herded them hogs.

"[We?] never made no trail drives from the place because a fellow by the name of, 'Ed Ogg', a buyer for some big outfit in the East, always bought what ever dad had to sell, and drove them away in the herd he'd already gathered for his company. Since dad never done

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no branding, I,d never even seen any branding except what Ogg's men did. [Everything?] they bought from anyplace, no matter what brand it carried, was branded a trail brand. road brand. Since the time, a road brand is usually one figure but the Ogg road brand 3 was two 8's, burnt on the right hip. The reason for the right hip instead of the ordinary left hip that was commonly used, he used the right hip in order to brand all of his critters in the same spot. Some of the brands were burnt on the left side, left fore-shoulder, and [all?] kinds of places. [The] most common place was on the left hip. he '88' brand would have been awfully hard to blot, so you see, [Hd?] knew his brands.

“When I was about 16, I left home by myself to go to work for a bigger spread than my dad's. I don't know yet what made me want to [leave?] a good home but I did any way. The only member of my family that I've seen since was ny bud. [?] was so young that I never got a job for quite awhile. I drifted on North 'til I hit the Snake River Valley Range, where I was hired by the ram rod on the [mule?] [Shoe?] outfit. [The?] name was their brand, a mule's shoe burnt in the left hip.

The [Muleshoe?] outfit run about 3,000 head, which for the most part, stayed up in the mountains where there was good grazing in the summer time. I happened to hit at the time for the Fall [Market?] roundup, which was the reason, I [suppose?], that they hired me, being short of hands. I soon showed them [that?] I'd make a top rider, which surprised them all. I showed up on an old hoss that was my own, but couldn't do so very much range work. [The?] [Muleshoe?] outfit gave me six hosses for my string, and several of them were good cutting hosses.

“[To?] make the roundup, all the ranchers banded together and went up into the mountains to drive the stock down. [?] all had orders to bring in everything that wasn't under fence. dairy could have 4 any number of critters, or rather milk cows, but if we found one or twenty loose, we drove them in regardless of the fuss raised about it. You see, they all know about, the custom of gathering everything in sight so they worked with the roundup in that they kept their critters under fence while the roundup was in process. Another

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reason for the roundup being held in the valley was that the ranchers would winter their critters there instead of feeding them through the winter when feed was so high. In the mountains, it would have [been?] impossible for the critters to graze because the grass would all be covered with snow, sometimes 15 and 20 feet deep in drifts. The Idaho winters are known for the extreme temperatures they have.

"These roundups would have from 30,000 to 50,000 critters in them, and all belonging to about 30 ranchers in all. You see, if a man had 1,000 critters, he wouldn't have to have very many cow pokes but if he had 2,000, he'd have to have twice as many as the other follow and that way, the work was divided proportionately. They [didn't?] just have their riders though, they'd have every member of their family in the roundup that could make a cow hand. There were several old men that were too old to ride, so they'd tend to the chuck wagon work. We'd have from one to three chuck wagons at work when the cattle were on a wide range but as the range was narrowed down, a chuck wagon would be cut off.

When the herd was finally gathered, there would be literally a sea of cattle. Just as far as you could see, almost, you'd see the herd. A sea of tossing horns, bawling cattle, and here and there, a critter mounting another for a better look around him. It was a picture I'll carry to my grave. The work was over quicker than you'd expect because every man would work like beavers. They'd all pitch in without a boss, and you'd see from 20 to 30 branding fires going all around the herd. It was really simple because the Spring and Fall roundups had calves to brand, and a calf was branded with the same iron its mother carried. A calf was the only thing you had to brand anyway, because the mothers all carried a brand unless it had grown up and escaped the roundups held before somehow. You see, a calf stays with its mother in all kinds of trouble, or anything that can happen to it. [Even?] when the mother is accidentally killed in some way or other, or if a varmint had killed it, the calf would stay as close as it could to its mother. If a varmint had [killed?] her, the calf would run off

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but come right back when it thought the varmint had gone away. I've found lots of dead calves around the carcass of a mother cow when a varmint or a beef hustler had killed her.

"Now; back to the branding. All the outfits furnished plenty of irons so each branding crew could have an iron for each outfit. [As?] a cow poke cut a critter out, another would take it and give the puncher another lasso, he'd return, cut out another, and so on. The work was a pleasure because everybody realized how necessary it was to work together and put it out 'til the work was all done. The cutting cow pokes only took a cow that had a mother with it, and only roped the mother because the calf would follow the mother out of the herd, somebody lassoed the calf, then they branded it 'til the herd was worked clean of calves that could be identified [by?] it's mothers.

"After these were worked over, then would come the critters that [worseleft?]. The ranchers decided on a percentage system to give the most of the unbranded grown critters to the rancher with the biggest herd, then so on down in a sort of a ratio way 'til the smallest herd would get the smallest number of unbranded grown critters. Each branding [fore?] had a tally sheet, and one man to each tally sheet would keep the tally and herd the branded critters to it's separate herd that would be kept away from the main herd 'til the work was all done. When the dividing had all be done, all the tally sheets would be brought together, each brand counted, then each rancher would know just how many critters he owned and was in his herd. After all the dividing had been done, and the tally sheets counted, the herds were all turned loose in the Valley to winter.

"All winter, the cow pokes rode through the valley and hunted calves that were either lost from their mothers, or calves with poor mothers. When a calf was found with a poor mother, they were separated and fed in the feed late maintained all winter 'til they were strong enough to feed on their own hook. [The?] lost calves would be fed the same way. The worst part of the winter riding was when a puncher had to ride the valley lines to keep the critters from straying up into the hills. He'd have to be away from his bunk house for several days at a time, and the weather really got cold. You'd come on a grown cow

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puncher [crying?] with the cold at times. It seemed the cold would penetrate to the very marrow in a man's bones.

"When a man was caught away from his bunkhouse at night, he'd gather himself quite a lot of wood, and build two fires. First, he'd cook his supper on one of the fires, and keep his back to the other, then he'd move one of the fires, and make his bed down on the spot where the fire had been. This would keep him warm for 7 several hours, then the cold would wake him up because his fires would just about [be?] out by that time, and the cold would have gotten back into the ground under him. He'd then make [him?] two more fires, and repeat what he'd done before 'til morning came, when he'd make his breakfast and be on his way. Breakfast was nothing but a beef steak fried and a pot of black coffee strong enough to walk, it was so black. I use to lap that coffee up like it was good but I don't believe I'd be able to keep it down now since I started to using cream and sugar.

"None of the cattle was trail drove out of the valley. A big Eastern firm by the name of 'Ryan Brothers', had a cattle buyer by the name of 'Utah Slim', that bought cattle out, in Oregon, and drove the herd across the plains 'till he got to Snake River Valley. [When?] he got there, he'd pick out what he wanted to buy, add them to his herd and drive on. Utah was one of the cattlemen of the old school that could look at a steer or a cow, and almost tell you it's history, weight, heighth, and all about it.

"The second year I was on the Muleshoe outfit, Utah's herd got in in time to be in on the roundup. Utah [himself?] didn't do much riding but he let the ranchers use his hands to help in the roundup. [As?] I said, they got everybody that could ride and they just used his punchers too.

"About the very best rider I ever saw was one of his men that he brought from the Oregon Range. His name was Dan Ogden. He sort of showed us boys up while making up the roundup, and then when the cutting was being done, he cut out about twice as many as any other one man. He'd ride his hose into the herd, make it understand which critter was

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wanted, and that critter was brought 8 to taw. That hoss would stay right with the critter 'til Dan's loop was [tossed?]. [His?] loops never failed to snare either, but the hoss always put him in such good positions that he had the best chance everytime to cast. [When?], he'd snake the critter out of the herd in good time, get rid of it, then back to another. He just naturally was a real cow hand.

"The boys all decided to have a contest after the roundup for a little fun. [Utah?] was all for it too, because those contests were lots of fun. The worst bucking hoss that could be found on the range in that section was brought to Dan to see him ride it. [After?] a couple of cow pokes had the hoss all ready to ride, and he'd got on; we saw a real show. The hoss was really a bad one that nobody so far had been able to ride. Dan stayed with him, then slapped him with his conk piece to make him mad when the hoss slowed down. The hoss had had good riders on him before, and when the rider stayed with him so long, he'd try to fall on the ground and roll over. [That?] was a trick that usually crippled or killed a cow poke if he [wasn't?] fast enough to jump out of the way, and have some rider come between the hoss and the rider.

"Well, we all held our breath when we saw that hoss fall. We wasn't [set?] for what Dan did because we'd never heard of such a thing. [As?] the hoss went down, he jumped clear, grabbed some dirt, threw it into the hoss's eyes, then was back in the [saddle?] before the hoss got back upright. Talk about a mad [hoss?]? [That?] hoss was fit to be tied. He tried the rolling stunt two or three times, then decided that he was fighting a losing battle so he quit. That was the most outstanding ride I ever saw or heard of. You know, this 9 herding business can get to be pretty bad. Some of the tales I've heard were worse than could have been. If it hadn't of been that I personally saw this, I wouldn't have believed it when a follow told me.

"This fellow wasn't such a good pistol shot, though. [He?] had a man on our own range that was a natural born pistol shot. If he ever aimed at a mark, nobody ever know it. [It?] seemed that he just lifted his gat and fired before it came up as high as he put it. The mark

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was never missed as far as anybody ever knew, either. He'd just be riding along, lots of times, and [see?] something to shoot. He'd get it before anybody else's gat had cleared the leather. His name was, 'Dan Hill', and he finally got to be the sheriff of the adjoining county.

"The sheep began to take the [country?] in my second year, so I took out for greener pastures. [That's?] the history of our country, almost. First, the buffalo hunters, the cattle, then the sheep came in and cropped the grass so close that cattle couldn't get to it, (cattle won't eat where a sheep has been for several years) then the farmers came in and put the land under cultivation. You might say that farming done both away.

"My next job was sort of a grandstand job. I got'a job on the 'UIO', a big stage coach line, driving a six hoss team to my coach. My run connected two others, starting at Old Mountain Home, Idaho, and running about 50 miles West to a transfer station, where another coach picked up the passengers and carried them on.

"After 18 Mouths with the UIO, which stood for the, 'Utah, Idaho, and Oregon' line, I went to work for a small individual line. It run about 60 miles from Old Mountain Home back up into the 10 mountains to Rocky Bar. I didn't drive but two hosses on this run.

"I almost lost my life on it though, if I hadn't of obeyed instructions and followed my hunches too. [My?] instructions to holdups were, 'When held up, don't refuse anything because if you shot one of them road agents, when they hold you up again, they'd shoot first and ask you to hold 'em un afterwards'.

"[I?] [had?] one passenger, some mail, and some [stuff?] in the Fargo express box and was on my way into Old Mountain Home. [After?] I'd gone through Devil's Dive Canyon and had to go up a hill to reach [Gage?] Hen's Flat. On the way up, I had to pass a big bluff about [80?] foot high. In the wall of this bluff along the road, was several cracks big enough to hide a man if he stood to the back of them. I was fairly making the coach hum going up that hill, and had begun to slow up on account of the drag when a fellow stepped

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out of a crack, and said, 'Reach for the Sky!' I don't recall hearing the exact words because I was busy driving but the passenger said that was what the road agent said. Anyway, I stopped the coach and reached without further ado. Then he said, 'Got a gun?'

"I said, 'No'.

"He said, 'Got a passenger?'

"I said, 'One'.

"He said 'Back down the hill'. I started to backing the team but the right hoss wouldn't back. He was scared by the agent and didn't want to back. [After?] I worked with him a little, the agent said, 'Waits I'll lead him back'. As he came up to the hoss, he reared and put the coach cross-wise of the road. I thought, He'll get mad now, and we'll have trouble. Instead, he says, 'Got a hachet?' 11 "I said, 'Yes'.

"He said, 'Th'ow it but don't make no bad moves. It might be your lost if you do'. I th'owed him the hachet then gave him the express box when he asked for it. He took the mail sack, rifled it and got what he wanted out of it, smashed the express box with the hachet and took what he [wanted?] out of it, [gathered?] his stuff up, then was about to leave when a voices called,

"What's ups [Rowdy?]? The voice came from over the hill toward Mountain Home and I recognised it as Jim Donovan's voice. The road agent was so scared that if I was a mind to, I could have jumped off the coach [right?] onto his back and bore [him?] down but thinks I, '[There's?] [?] man on top of that bluff or he wouldn't give [me?] that opening'.

"The agent told me to call him down or he'd shoot me so I hollered out, 'Jim, c'mon down and help me because I'm stuck and got the road blocked'.

"I wish you could have seen Jim's face when he came around the coach and the agent [th'owed?] down on him. He was one more surprised person. While he was th'owing

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his hands up, he was saying, 'Wha-wha-wha', 'til the agent told him to close his trap or he'd open a hole all the way through. After he was satisfied that we wouldn't make any [trouble?] for him, he backed up the hill 'til he was out of sight, then we, heard hoss [hooves?] just a flying off down the road. Jim helped me get straightened up, then he lit out for his wagon, turned around and beat it all the way back to town. [He?] sure must have gone a-flying because I went [pretty?] fast myself and Everybody along the road asked me if I'd [been?] held up. When I got into town, the superintendent of the road was waiting for me and 12 already knew all that Jim knew. I gave him the details, and he and the sheriff lit out for the spot to see if they [could?] pick up the trail while it was still day-light. The [deputy?] sheriff organized a [posse?] but the sheriff had already trailed the agent to a big stretch of lava rock, where the trail was lost for good. The next time I saw the sheriff, he told me that there were two men, that one of them had laid down on top of the bluff while the other held me up. The way [they?] figured that out was, they saw the ground scraped up like it would to where a man had laid down, and a place where he had a rifle sighted. I guess if I'd have made a wrong move at any time, I'd have got my ticket for the hunting grounds.

"I was on that road for seven years, then decided to make a move. My next stage driving job was from White Sulphur Springs to Neihart, [Montana?]. This was another two hoss coach with about a 30 mile run. By this time, the coach lines had begin to have pretty good hoss flesh to pull with. In those days, you hardly ever saw a hoss that weighed over 1,000 pounds. The big hosses that we used were brod up from Indian ponies, and were strong with [long?] wind. Of course, [nothing?] like the hoss flesh you can get nowadays, but good enough for those days.

"After two years, I decided to go back to the range for awhile. I got a job with the 'SS' Ranch in Ady county, Idaho, about 50 miles South of Boise.City. They run about 500 head, with the SS branded on the left hip. The men that owned the spread were Charlie and [George?] Sayers. I liked them so well that I stayed on for five years. The roundups and all were about like the others, excepting we had more time for hunting, fishing, and contests

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together. This was the only place I ever [worked?] on that I really liked my job 13 so well that I turned down a better paying job to stay with it.

“Speking of hunting, Charlie had an educated hoss for sure. That hoss was a cutting hoss, about the best [peger?] I ever saw, end the only hunting hoss I ever saw that was sort of like a blood hound, in that it seemed to scent deer when it trailed. It would stay right on [a?] deer's trail, and when she got close to the deer, she didn't make a noise but [would?] wiggle her ears. [That?] was a sign that deer was [close?] and about to [pop?] in sight. Charlie being such a good [rifle?] shot, the two made a pair that couldn't be beat by nobody.

“Why, one time the mare and Charlie run into a herd of [16?] deer, and Charlie got 15 on them almost before they [could?] get away. He brought 15 of them home, anyway. [When?] he [went?] hunting on that mare, he'd get two or three, pack them on her back, and she'd go to the ranch, somebody'd unload her, and she'd come back to where Charley was so he could ride her back home. Charlie used a 44Henry for years 'til he finally got himself a Winchester.

“Charlie and George finally sold out to go West, and I decided to go to Texas. I'd worked for them for five years, and was sorry to see them give it up but I guess it was all for the best because I did better in Texas then I ever did up North. After working here and there at different things, I finally landed a job on tho old Bar N Ranch at Isom, Texas. Isom was just a sort of a trading post on the Star mail route from Plymouth but is now, the city of Borger, Texas, the oil town.

“I only worked the three winter months following the Fall roundup. I really didn't work long enough to come to know the place very well. About all I do know about it is that is was owned by Johnson, Johnson, and Crow, and that it [joined?] the 6666 Ranch on 14 the North. I reckon the Bar N run about 3,000 [herd?] with the brand on the left hip made like this, . I calculate the 3,000 from the roundup herd's size.

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"I left the Bar N to go to the big Pitchfork outfit North of Pampa, Texas. It was owned by some Englishmen and the brand was made just like a pitchfork. I don't recall the number they owned nor the number of sections of land they run on. [After?] I made a pay-day, I left and went to the JA Ranch, which was located at the lower, or Southern end, of the [?] Duro Canyon. It wasn't as big as the Pitchfork but I don't recall how big it was either. [After?] I made a pay-day there, I drifted on South and was taken on by the Hopkins Ranch at [Pampa?]. The Hopkins Ranch was really a stock farm. [They?] owned different numbers of critters from time to time. Owning more in the winter than the summer because they'd grow lots of heigers and when they'd make a big crop, they'd winter critters for ranchers besides buying up some on their hook.

"By this time, through careful saving of my money, I'd saved over [\$4500.00, and carried it in a money bag which I had around my waist. It was a little uncomfortable at times but [?] just got used to it much as a man or a women gets used to a corses. [?] man that I'd met and come to know fairly well in Pampa, by the name of Cy Williams, died, leaving a widow with two little kids. I felt sort of bad about that, not knowing that he left property.

His widow [approached?] me and told me that she had to sell some property to pay funeral expenses and get a ticket to California for herself and children. She explained the locations and all, and I gave her every cent I had for it. The property was a quarter section at Katy, two lots in Fort Worth, and a section out of Farmers villa 15 "With the property at Farmersvilla, I traded around and got myself into the real estate business. I never did go back to the range any more after this, because the real estate business got me into the oil business, and so on. I made a [lot?] more money wet nursing oil wells than I ever did punching dogies along and riding hosses.